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United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

June 6, 2002

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

Qwest will soon submit an application to the Federal Communications Commission for permission to enter the long distance market in Iowa. I urge the FCC's expeditious consideration of the merits of this application.

One of major goals and promises of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was to encourage broader competition among telecommunications companies, and thus, to benefit consumers through better service and a wider array of choices. In exchange for opening the doors for local competition, the Regional Bell companies, upon meeting the 14-point checklist, were to be allowed to provide long distance service.

It has been a long time coming, but from the information I have received, I am excited and very hopeful that Iowa consumers are on the verge of reaping these benefits of the '96 Act. It is my understanding that the Iowa Utilities Board is about to complete its testing and review of Qwest's activities related to each of the 14 competitive points outlined in the Act and thus far has concluded that Qwest has conditionally met those requirements.

I hope you fully appreciate the unique challenges and obstacles facing rural America in its efforts to benefit from same high-quality, state-of-the-art telecommunications services that come far easier to our urban neighbors. Consumers from sparsely-populated regions are separated by long distances, which understandably make services more expensive. Opening up our markets to more providers and competition will help assure rural Americans are not left behind.

Therefore, your serious consideration and efforts to expedite this application is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Chuck Grassley
Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

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